

School Council Meeting Minutes: January 24, 2022

In attendance: John Smith, Nicole Kepnes, Donna Strouse, John Lin, Maggie Charron, Anita Lotti, Tim O'Mara, Kate McCarthy, John Soraghan, Amal Sharfi, Lilly Caplan, Chelsea Ohene-Addo, Liza Birmingham, Grant Mayer, and Emily Waugh

Review of December Minutes

- The CAD program at the high school has grown over the past few years and offers a great project-based learning structure.
- Three finalists had been named in the Superintendent search process.
- Timing and details of the budget update (particularly for Math and English) were discussed.
- Updates regarding masking policies, the equity audit, and midyears were discussed.

Latest Covid and Testing Update

- Kate McCarthy, our Director of Student Services, shared the status of Covid testing at school and masking updates.
- Students who are symptomatic or who have a positive test result in their household will be able to receive testing up until February break.
- Home tests will soon be made available to students and staff. These weekly testing kits will be distributed until April vacation, and are available through an opt-in system.
- Masks will continue to be required until February 28th, at which point a local decision will be made to either continue wearing masks or potentially make them optional.

SEL Survey

- On Thursday, Feb 3rd, the social-emotional learning survey will be conducted for students. Period 6 will be extended to give students the opportunity to complete the survey.
- The survey hopes to address what strategies, concerns, stressors, and issues exist within the DS community. Panorama Software will be used to improve and take care of the mental health of students.
- Results from the survey should be back around early April.

Course Registration

- 9th, 10th, and 11th graders are beginning the process of selecting courses for next year.
- A variety of factors ultimately decides course placement, including student input, a discussion between a student and teacher, and performance in a current class.

Budget Update

- Several requests for increases in the budget are pending school committee approval.
- 0.6 - Math - This increase would allow for a full-time hire to replace a part-time retired position. More class sections would be available for the Financial Literacy course and 9th and 10th grade class sizes could be lowered.
- 0.2 - English - This increase would allow for lower class sizes.

- 1.0 - GRIT Counselor - This increase would allow for a stronger social-emotional support program.
- Capital budget: Considering allocating funds to replacing roofs, HVAC units, doors, athletic fields, Mudge Auditorium, and study spaces on campus.

Midyear Week Feedback

- Students agreed that the midyear week provided a good catchup period, especially considering the amount of Covid-related absences leading up to the end of the semester.
- Many students felt like the break from testing was great for helping to de-stress and prioritize mental health.
- Final exams are still scheduled for the end of the year.

Next Meeting:

Monday, February 14th, 2022